

Congressman Roe Investigates Document Tampering and Mishandling at the Veterans Benefits Administration

WASHINGTON,
DC — Congressman
Phil Roe (TN-1) gave the following opening statement in the Joint Committee Hearing
on Document Mishandling and Shredding at the Department of Veterans Affairs:

“Thank
you for yielding, Mr. Chairman.

“I
would like to start by saying that I am looking forward to working with the
members on both of Subcommittees here today, and particularly with you, Mr.
Mitchell, and the other members on the Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations as the Ranking Member of the subcommittee. I understand
that you and my predecessor, Ms. Ginny Brown-Waite, had a good working
relationship on this committee, and I hope that we can continue in that vein as
we conduct oversight on issues relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs,
and work to assist those who sacrificed so much for the good of our country,
our nation’s veterans.

“The
issue at hand, document mishandling and shredding at the Department of Veterans
Affairs is one of great concern. When these issues came to the forefront
of our scope back in early October of last year, during an investigation by the
Office of the Inspector General showed that documents necessary for processing
claims were found in shredding bins at several Veteran Benefits Administration

(VBA) facilities. Further issues arose from documents with adjusted
‘date-of-claims’ which initiated a request by Ranking Member Buyer on October
14, 2008 for an OIG investigation into the issue.

“Our
nation’s veterans deserve better than this. The mishandling of their
claims documents is inexcusable. The VA is responsible for assuring our
nation’s veterans that they will be given every opportunity to submit their
claims, and have their complete claims file reviewed in a timely manner.
I appreciate that former Secretary Peake took immediate action to address these
issues, and I look forward to hearing from today’s witnesses on what further
actions have been taken to rectify this situation.

“Again,
thank you Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.”

Witness
Testimonies

Panel
1

Kerry
Baker, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans

Ronald
B. Abrams, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program

Kathryn
A. Witt, Co-Chair, Government Relations Committee, Gold Star Wives of America,
Inc.

Geneva
Moore, Senior Veterans Service Representative, Veterans Benefits Administration
Regional Office, Winston-Salem, NC, on Behalf of the American Federation of
Government Employees

Panel
2

Belinda

J. Finn, Assistant Inspector General for Auditing, Office of Inspector General,
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Accompanied

By:

James

O'Neill, Assistant Inspector General of Investigations, Office of Inspector
General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Panel

3

Michael

Walcoff, Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration,
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Accompanied

By:

Bradley

Mayes, Director, Compensation and Pension Service, Veterans Benefits
Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans

Diana

M. Rubens, Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans
Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans

For

more information on this hearing, please visit the House Committee on Veterans's
Affairs website at www.veterans.house.gov.